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ABSTRACT

A study of 760 individuals was conducted in Iowa to discover attitudes towards public elementary and secondary education. The primary focus was to measure the attitudes and opinions of the general public regarding the nature, quality, and organization of education. A secondary goal was to identify concerns and problems, as well as to suggest possibilities for improvement. Data include characteristics of the sample; grades (ratings) for schools, colleges and universities, educational agencies and organizations, and local school boards and parent-teacher organizations; evaluations of specific programs; personal characteristics of the best teacher; goals of public education; and opinions of what schools are doing best. (JD)

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Attitudes and Opinions about Iowa Education

General Frequency Report for A Statewide Study of the General Public

Report No. 2 in the project:
"Education in Iowa: Attitudes and Opinions of the General Public"

Research Institute for Studies in Education
College of Education
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
April 1981

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ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS ABOUT IOWA EDUCATION

General Frequency Report

For

A Statewide Study of

the General Public

by

Richard D. Warren

Virgil S. Lagomarcino

Report No. 2 in the Project:
Education in Iowa - Attitudes
and Opinions of the General Public

Research Institute for Studies in Education

College of Education

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

April 1981

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Education is one of the major institutions influencing society, and in turn, education is also influenced by other major institutions in that society. Traditionally, education has provided the individual with economic rewards and social advancement and has added strength and security to the American society. Conversely, recent events in society and the educational system have caused concern about the quality of education, specific programs, personnel in school systems, and the preparation of students.

Although national polls have been conducted examining attitudes concerning education, the attitudes of persons at the local and state levels are of particular importance since many critical decisions are made at these levels. Also, there are unique needs at these levels and state surveys can be compared to national findings to ascertain and assess similarities and differences.

The Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE) at Iowa State University is completing the first segment of a series of studies surveying the attitudes toward education in the state of Iowa. The focus of the series is on different population samples such as general public, teachers, school board members, school administrators, legislators, educational opinion leaders, educators at colleges and universities, Department of Public Instruction personnel, Area Education personnel, members of parent-teacher associations, and students. In this report are presented findings from a subset of data from the first study which is a survey of the general public concerning education in Iowa.

Although the primary emphasis of the study was on attitudes concerning public elementary and secondary education in Iowa, some questions were related to postsecondary education and the preparation of students for postsecondary education. This monograph is a frequency report on the variables in the study. Later reports will examine the relationships among variables.

Areas included are characteristics of the sample, grades (ratings) for various types of schools and groups, grades for specific preparation programs and personnel in local public schools, grades for public services, and goals of public education. Suggestions for improving the quality of education, examination of the problems in local schools and an identification of information sources were also examined.

Description of the Study

This study, in its entirety, focuses primarily on the attitudes of persons concerning public elementary and secondary education in Iowa. It attempts to measure the attitudes and opinions of the general public regarding the nature, quality, and organization of education. In addition, the study seeks to identify the major concerns and problems as well as to suggest possibilities for improvement. A comprehensive focus on area community colleges and four-year colleges and universities will be projects for future studies.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this survey of the general public's attitudes toward education are:

A. To determine the attitudes and opinions of the general public about the nature and quality of education in Iowa.

B. To elicit ideas and suggestions about improving the nature and quality of education in Iowa.

C. To determine demographic factors and personal characteristics related to attitudes about nature and quality of education.

D. To determine demographic factors and personal characteristics related to ideas and suggestions for improvement.

Survey Procedure

The study of the general public in Iowa on attitudes toward education was conducted during late spring and summer of 1980. A total of 760 respondents representing 98 of the 99 counties were interviewed by telephone (335) or returned completed mail questionnaires (425).

In developing the instrument for the study, comments and suggestions were received from selected faculty members in the College of Education and from other colleges within the university, from teachers and administrators in public schools, and from personnel in the Survey Section of the Statistical Laboratory. The Gallup education polls conducted yearly since 1969 were reviewed and several questions were based on these national surveys.

The instrument covered the general areas of goals of education; quality of education including ratings of schools and organizations, education programs and personnel; major problems; suggestions for improvement; sources of information; and demographic variables.

The population was defined as all persons over 18 years of age who had a telephone at place of residence. The general sampling procedure was random digit dialing. After obtaining a working residential number, the callers explained the study and used a random procedure to determine who in the household would be interviewed. If the person answering the telephone were the one to be interviewed, a telephone interview was completed or a questionnaire was mailed. If the person selected to be interviewed were available at the time, a request was made to mail a questionnaire to the selected respondent. Seven hundred sixty (760) completed telephone and mail questionnaires were used in analyzing the data. This represents 65.35 percent of the total contacts.

Of the 1163 initial contacts, 322 telephone interviews were made and 607 questionnaires were mailed. During the telephoning, 234 refusals were received ranging from health reasons and expressed lack of knowledge about schools and education to unwillingness to participate. If a mailed questionnaire were not returned in a given time period, those receiving mailed questionnaires were reminded by post card and/or telephone. During this reminder procedure, an additional 13 were interviewed by telephone leaving 594 to respond by mail. Of these 594 persons, 425 returned completed questionnaires. An additional 17 returned unuseable questionnaires.

The Survey Section of the Statistical Laboratory selected the sample, supervised telephone interviewing and mailing of the questionnaires. Coding the questionnaires was completed by personnel in the Survey Section and graduate students in the Research Institute for Studies in Education. The data analysis and table preparation were done by personnel in the Research Institute for Studies in Education.

Characteristics of the Sample

The sample was analyzed according to the following variables: sex, highest academic degree, family income, present residence, length of residence in the community/area, how the respondent views him/ herself on a liberal/conservative continuum, marital status, employment, household composition, and the extent to which the respondent's children have been involved in education.

Data pertinent to the characteristics of the 760 respondents are presented in Tables 1 and 2. A majority of the sample, 62 percent, have no children in school at this time, approximately 26 percent are between the

ages of 18 and 29, and over half (54 percent) are female. Fifty four percent have graduated from high school, and one-third have finished post secondary programs. Approximately 35 percent of the sample had an annual income of $10,000 to $19,999. More than 20 percent earned less than $10,000 and about 15 percent had an income of $30,000 or more. Approximately 36 percent of the respondents have lived within the community/area for over 25 years. However, almost 42 percent have resided in the community/area for 15 years or less. Approximately 31 percent of the sample live in towns with populations of 5,000 and less while 23 percent live in population areas of 5,000 to 50,000. When describing themselves on a scale of "very conservative to very liberal", a preponderance of respondents indicated they felt themselves to be moderates (48 percent). Most of the remaining (40 percent) declared themselves to be conservative.

The percentages for the respondents who have had children attend schools in the state of Iowa are as follows: 61 percent, public elementary school; 11 percent, parochial elementary school; 43 percent, public secondary school; 5 percent, parochial secondary school; 14 percent area community college; 9 percent, trade, business, or technical school; and 17 and 12 percent respectively public university or private college/ university.

Additional details on the characteristics of the sample are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Also presented in these tables are the percentages for the frequencies adjusted for the no answers. The last column presents the cumulative frequency when no answer responses are not included.

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
CHILDREN IN SCHOOL LAST YEAR				
No	471	62.0	62.3	62.3
Yes	285	37.5	37.7	100.0
No Answer	4	0.5	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOL LAST YEAR				
None	471	62.0	62.0	62.0
One	129	17.0	17.0	78.9
Two	90	11.8	11.8	90.8
Three	43	5.7	5.7	96.4
Four	14	1.8	1.8	98.3
Five	3	0.4	0.4	98.7
Six	2	0.3	0.3	98.9
Seven	2	0.3	0.3	99.2
No Answer	6	0.8	0.8	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
AGE				
18-29	198	26.1	26.6	26.6
30-39	180	23.7	24.2	50.8
40-49	109	14.3	14.7	65.5
50-65	164	21.6	22.0	87.5
Over 65	93	12.2	12.5	100.0
No Answer	16	2.1	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
SEX				
Male	345	45.4	45.9	45.9
Female	407	53.6	54.1	100.0
No Answer	8	1.1	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE (Continued)

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
HIGHEST DEGREE				
None	99	13.0	13.1	13.1
High School	403	53.0	53.5	66.7
Trade, Business, or Technical School	77	10.1	10.2	76.9
Associate Degree (2 Years)	41	5.4	5.4	82.3
College Degree (4 Years)	79	10.4	10.5	92.8
Professional Degree	28	3.7	3.7	96.5
Graduate Degree	26	3.4	3.5	100.0
No Answer	7	0.9	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
FAMILY INCOME				
Less Than $10,000	158	20.8	22.2	22.2
$10,000 To $19,999	268	35.3	37.6	59.8
$20,000 To $29,999	173	22.8	24.3	84.1
$30,000 To $49,999	84	11.1	11.8	95.9
$50,000 And Over	29	3.8	4.1	100.0
No Answer	48	6.3	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PRESENTLY LIVE				
Farm	150	19.7	20.0	20.0
Nonfarm Country	56	7.4	7.5	27.4
Town Less Than 5,000	236	31.1	31.4	58.9
Town 5,000 To 50,000	175	23.0	23.3	82.2
City Over 50,000	134	17.6	17.8	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE (Continued)

		NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
YEARS IN COMMUNITY					
0 To 5		152	20.0	20.4	20.4
6 To 15		167	22.0	22.4	42.8
16 To 25		150	19.7	20.1	62.9
Over 25		277	36.4	37.1	100.0
No Answer		14	1.8	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
DESCRIPTION OF SELF					
Very Conservative		57	7.5	7.6	7.6
Conservative		244	32.1	32.6	40.2
Moderate		367	48.3	49.0	89.2
Liberal		74	19.7	19.9	99.1
Very Liberal		7	0.9	0.9	100.0
No Answer		11	1.4	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
MARITAL STATUS					
Married		521	68.6	69.3	69.3
Widowed		67	8.8	8.9	78.2
Separated or Divorced		62	8.2	8.2	86.4
Single, Never Married		102	13.4	13.6	100.0
No Answer		8	1.1	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
EMPLOYMENT					
Currently Employed		472	62.1	62.7	62.7
Retired		79	10.4	10.5	73.2
Currently Unemployed		21	2.8	2.8	76.0
Homemaker		152	20.0	20.2	96.1
Student		22	2.9	2.9	99.1
Other		7	0.9	0.9	100.0
No Answer		7	0.9	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE (Continued)

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
MEMBERS OF HOUSEHOLD 18 AND OVER				
One	165	21.7	21.7	21.7
Two	477	62.8	62.8	84.5
Three	89	11.7	11.7	96.2
Four	23	3.0	3.0	99.2
Five	4	0.5	0.5	99.7
Six	1	0.1	0.1	99.9
Seven	1	0.1	0.1	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE				
None	382	50.3	50.3	50.3
One	128	16.8	16.8	67.1
Two	150	19.7	19.7	86.8
Three	66	8.7	8.7	95.5
Four	19	2.5	2.5	98.0
Five	5	0.7	0.7	98.7
Seven	2	0.3	0.3	98.9
Eight or more	2	0.3	0.3	99.2
No Answer	6	0.8	0.8	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
CHILDREN NO LONGER IN HOUSEHOLD				
None	418	55.0	55.0	55.0
One	68	8.9	8.9	63.9
Two	109	14.3	14.3	78.3
Three	76	10.0	10.0	88.3
Four	42	5.5	5.5	93.8
Five	21	2.8	2.8	96.6
Six	10	1.3	1.3	97.9
Seven	1	0.1	0.1	98.0
Eight or more	8	1.1	1.1	99.1
No Answer	7	0.9	0.9	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 2. SCHOOLS CHILDREN HAVE ATTENDED IN IOWA

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL				
No	280	36.8	37.6	37.6
Yes	465	61.2	62.4	100.0
No Answer	15	2.0	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PAROCHIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL				
No	660	86.8	88.9	88.9
Yes	82	10.8	11.1	100.0
No Answer	18	2.4	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL				
No	408	53.6	55.2	55.2
Yes	330	43.4	44.8	100.0
No Answer	22	2.9	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PAROCHIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL				
No	701	92.2	94.5	94.5
Yes	41	5.4	5.5	100.0
No Answer	18	2.4	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 2. SCHOOLS CHILDREN HAVE ATTENDED IN IOWA
(Continued)

		NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
TRADE, BUSINESS, TECHNICAL SCHOOL					
No		676	88.9	91.1	91.1
Yes		66	8.7	8.9	100.0
No Answer		18	2.4	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE					
No		635	83.6	85.5	85.5
Yes		108	14.2	14.5	100.0
No Answer		17	2.2	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PUBLIC UNIVERSITY					
No		612	80.6	82.4	82.4
Yes		131	17.2	17.6	100.0
No Answer		17	2.2	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PRIVATE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY					
No		652	85.8	87.8	87.8
Yes		91	12.0	12.2	100.0
No Answer		17	2.2	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

Grades for Schools

The respondents were asked to assign letter grades of A,B,C,D or F to selected schools, colleges, universities, educational agencies and organizations located within their districts and Iowa to indicate the "quality of the job they are doing." In the study, respondents were instructed, "If you feel you don't know enough about the group to grade it, you may circle 'Don't know'. This is a perfectly legitimate response."

For public schools in their local districts, approximately 55 percent of the respondents assigned A or B grades (Table 3). Approximately 60 percent of the respondents gave elementary schools in their district A or B grades compared to approximately 48 percent who rated secondary schools as either A or B. For Iowa Public Schools, as a whole, approximately 56 percent gave A or B grades (Table 5).

In rating elementary and secondary schools in the district, one-fifth of the sample selected "don't know" as a response. For Iowa Public Schools, as a whole, 15 percent selected "don't know" as a response. For those assigning grades, 73 percent gave A or B to elementary, nearly 61 percent gave A or B to secondary and approximately 67 percent gave A or B to Iowa public schools in general.

Grades for Colleges and Universities

For the area community college serving their district, over 56 percent of the total sample gave a rating of A or B. When examining only those who assigned grades, it was found that, 82 percent gave A or B (Table 4) to the community college. Approximately 30 percent selected the "don't know" response. For public universities, 63 percent of the total gave grades of

A or B, and of those assigning grades, over 83 percent gave A or B (Table 5). Approximately one-fourth selected the "don't know" response. For private colleges and universities, approximately 51 percent of the total gave A or B, and of those assigning grades, 81 percent gave A or B. Approximately 36 percent selected the "don't know" response.

Grades for Agencies and Organizations

For Area Education Agency serving their district, approximately 22 percent of the total respondents gave A or B grades. Approximately 17 percent gave A or B grades to the State of Iowa Department of Public Instruction and 17 percent gave A or B grades to Iowa State Education Association (Table 6).

Slightly over two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they were not familiar with the Area Education Agency, Department of Public Instruction, and Iowa State Education Association, (Table 6). Of the approximately one-third assigning grades, the assignment of A or B was 90 percent for Area Education Agency, 74 percent for the Department of Public Instruction, and 76 percent for Iowa State Education Association.

Grades for Organizations in District

Local school boards received nearly 38 percent A or B grades and parent-teacher organizations received 30 percent (Table 4). For those assigning grades, 49 percent gave A or B to local school boards and 48 percent to parent-teacher organizations. Over one-fifth of the sample selected "don't know" for local school boards and the percentage of "don't know" responses increased to 35 percent for parent-teacher organizations.

TABLE 3. GRADES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SCHOOL DISTRICT

GRADE	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
PUBLIC SCHOOLS				
A	87	11.4	13.4	13.4
B	330	43.4	51.0	64.5
C	205	27.0	31.7	96.1
D	23	3.0	3.6	99.7
F	2	0.3	0.3	100.0
Don't Know	33	4.3	****	100.0
No Answer	80	10.5	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS				
A	127	16.7	20.5	20.5
B	325	42.8	52.5	73.0
C	149	19.6	24.1	97.1
D	16	2.1	2.6	99.7
F	2	0.3	0.3	100.0
Don't Know	136	17.9	****	100.0
No Answer	5	0.7	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS				
A	76	10.0	12.7	12.7
B	287	37.8	48.0	60.7
C	198	26.1	33.1	93.8
D	34	4.5	5.7	99.5
F	3	0.4	0.5	100.0
Don't Know	156	20.5	****	100.0
No Answer	6	0.8	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 4. GRADES FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN SCHOOL DISTRICT

GRADE	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD				
A	74	9.7	12.5	12.5
B	213	28.0	36.1	48.6
C	213	28.0	36.1	84.7
D	70	9.2	11.9	96.6
F	20	2.6	3.4	100.0
Don't Know	161	21.2	****	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION				
A	67	8.8	14.1	14.1
B	162	21.3	34.1	48.2
C	159	20.9	33.5	81.7
D	61	8.0	12.8	94.5
F	26	3.4	5.5	100.0
Don't Know	264	34.7	****	100.0
No Answer	21	2.8	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE				
A	178	23.4	34.0	34.0
B	251	33.0	47.9	81.9
C	81	10.7	15.5	97.3
D	11	1.4	2.1	99.4
F	3	0.4	0.6	100.0
Don't Know	230	30.3	****	100.0
No Answer	6	0.8	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 5. GRADES FOR SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN IOWA

GRADE	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS				
A	75	9.9	11.7	11.7
B	352	46.3	54.9	66.6
C	197	25.9	30.7	97.3
D	15	2.0	2.3	99.7
F	2	0.3	0.3	100.0
Don´t Know	114	15.0	****	100.0
No Answer	5	0.7	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES				
A	182	23.9	31.7	31.7
B	297	39.1	51.7	83.3
C	91	12.0	15.8	99.1
D	4	0.5	0.7	99.8
F	1	0.1	0.2	100.0
Don´t Know	182	23.9	****	100.0
No Answer	3	0.4	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES				
A	106	13.9	22.1	22.1
B	283	37.2	59.0	81.0
C	83	10.9	17.3	98.3
D	5	0.7	1.0	99.4
F	3	0.4	0.6	100.0
Don´t Know	277	36.4	****	100.0
No Answer	3	0.4	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 6. GRADES FOR EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

GRADE	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
AREA EDUCATION AGENCY IN YOUR DISTRICT				
A	45	5.9	19.2	19.2
B	121	15.9	51.7	70.9
C	53	7.0	22.6	93.6
D	13	1.7	5.6	99.1
F	2	0.3	0.9	100.0
Not Familiar	516	67.9	****	100.0
No Answer	4	0.5	****	100.0
No Grade	6	0.8	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
STATE OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION				
A	25	3.3	11.8	11.8
B	106	13.9	50.0	61.8
C	64	8.4	30.2	92.0
D	12	1.6	5.7	97.6
F	5	0.7	2.4	100.0
Not Familiar	531	69.9	****	100.0
No Answer	7	0.9	****	100.0
No Grade	10	1.3	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
IOWA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION				
A	28	3.7	13.5	13.5
B	102	13.4	49.0	62.5
C	66	8.7	31.7	94.2
D	8	1.1	3.8	98.1
F	4	0.5	1.9	100.0
Not Familiar	528	69.5	****	100.0
No Answer	8	1.1	****	100.0
No Grade	16	2.1	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

Evaluations of Programs, Functions and Personnel

Using grades of A,B,C,D, or F, individuals rated a number of the programs in their local schools. Competitive athletic programs for boys and girls and other extracurricular activities received the largest proportion of A grades (Table 7). Teaching basic skills and providing for students with special needs received A grades from approximately one-fifth of the respondents. Only two of the activities of the public schools failed to receive above average ratings (A or B) from at least 50 percent of the respondents. Counseling and vocational guidance programs and preparing students for jobs after high school were rated as average or below average more often than the other activities listed in Table 7.

The percentage of "don't know" responses was lower for specific programs and personnel than when rating the total school. For programs (using percentages based on those assigning grades), 50 percent or more gave A or B grades for preparing students for college; preparing students for additional vocational-technical training; teaching of basic skills - reading, writing and arithmetic; quality of total learning experience, competitive athletic program for boys; competitive athletic program for girls, other extracurricular activities and providing for students with special needs.

The quality of school personnel was also evaluated. The majority of respondents rated the quality of teachers in elementary schools as above average (63 percent), while fewer persons (50 percent) assigned secondary teachers above average grades. When calculated for those assigning grades, the percentages were 71 and 61 respectively for elementary and secondary teachers.

The performance of administrators and counselors, however, was rated above average somewhat less often. For the most part, school personnel who had less direct contact with students were less likely to receive above average ratings.

TABLE 7. GRADES FOR PROGRAMS, FUNCTIONS AND PERSONNEL IN LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GRADE	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
PREPARING STUDENTS FOR JOBS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL				
A	63	8.3	9.4	9.4
B	239	31.4	35.8	45.3
C	226	29.7	33.9	79.2
D	112	14.7	16.8	96.0
F	27	3.6	4.0	100.0
Don't Know	89	11.7	****	100.0
No Answer	4	0.5	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PREPARING STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE				
A	107	14.1	15.8	15.8
B	289	38.0	42.7	58.5
C	209	27.5	30.9	89.4
D	55	7.2	8.1	97.5
F	17	2.2	2.5	100.0
Don't Know	78	10.3	****	100.0
No Answer	5	0.7	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PREPARING STUDENTS FOR ADDITIONAL VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL TRAINING				
A	80	10.5	12.2	12.2
B	290	38.2	44.1	56.3
C	211	27.8	32.1	88.4
D	61	8.0	9.3	97.7
F	15	2.0	2.3	100.0
Don't Know	98	12.9	****	100.0
No Answer	5	0.7	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 7. GRADES FOR PROGRAMS, FUNCTIONS AND PERSONNEL IN LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)

GRADE	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
TEACHING OF BASIC SKILLS- READING, WRITING, ARITHMETIC				
A	170	22.4	23.8	23.8
B	227	29.9	31.8	55.6
C	194	25.5	27.2	82.8
D	86	11.3	12.0	94.8
F	37	4.9	5.2	100.0
Don't Know	41	5.4	****	100.0
No Answer	5	0.7	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
QUALITY OF THE TOTAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE				
A	79	10.4	11.3	11.3
B	292	38.4	41.8	53.2
C	264	34.7	37.8	91.0
D	54	7.1	7.7	98.7
F	9	1.2	1.3	100.0
Don't Know	55	7.2	****	100.0
No Answer	7	0.9	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
COMPETITIVE ATHLETIC PROGRAM FOR BOYS				
A	314	41.3	44.0	44.0
B	293	38.6	41.1	85.1
C	84	11.1	11.8	96.9
D	17	2.2	2.4	99.3
F	5	0.7	0.7	100.0
Don't Know	39	5.1	****	100.0
No Answer	8	1.1	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 7. GRADES FOR PROGRAMS, FUNCTIONS AND PERSONNEL IN LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)

GRADE	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
COMPETITIVE ATHLETIC PROGRAM FOR GIRLS				
A	243	32.0	34.3	34.3
B	281	37.0	39.6	73.9
C	134	17.6	18.9	92.8
D	40	5.3	5.6	98.4
F	11	1.4	1.6	100.0
Don't Know	43	5.7	****	100.0
No Answer	8	1.1	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
OTHER EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES				
A	267	35.1	37.7	37.7
B	295	38.8	41.7	79.4
C	121	15.9	17.1	96.5
D	23	3.0	3.2	99.7
F	2	0.3	0.3	100.0
Don't Know	46	6.1	****	100.0
No Answer	6	0.8	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS				
A	142	18.7	21.5	21.5
B	261	34.3	39.4	60.9
C	163	21.4	24.6	85.5
D	70	9.2	10.6	96.1
F	26	3.4	3.9	100.0
Don't Know	93	12.2	****	100.0
No Answer	5	0.7	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 7. GRADES FOR PROGRAMS, FUNCTIONS AND PERSONNEL IN LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)

GRADE	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
COUNSELING AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE				
A	70	9.2	10.9	10.9
B	238	31.3	37.0	47.9
C	225	29.6	35.0	82.9
D	87	11.4	13.5	96.4
F	23	3.0	3.6	100.0
Don't Know	110	14.5	****	100.0
No Answer	7	0.9	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
QUALITY OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS				
A	151	19.9	22.8	22.8
B	319	42.0	48.2	71.0
C	167	22.0	25.2	96.2
D	21	2.8	3.2	99.4
F	4	0.5	0.6	100.0
Don't Know	89	11.7	****	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
QUALITY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS				
A	83	10.9	13.4	13.4
B	296	38.9	47.7	61.0
C	208	27.4	33.5	94.5
D	31	4.1	5.0	99.5
F	3	0.4	0.5	100.0
Don't Know	132	17.4	****	100.0
No Answer	7	0.9	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 7. GRADES FOR PROGRAMS, FUNCTIONS AND PERSONNEL IN LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Continued)

GRADE	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
A	83	10.9	13.8	13.8
B	193	25.4	32.2	46.0
C	216	28.4	36.0	82.0
D	83	10.9	13.8	95.8
F	25	3.3	4.2	100.0
Don't Know	156	20.5	****	100.0
No Answer	4	0.5	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
QUALITY OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS				
A	99	13.0	15.1	15.1
B	252	33.2	38.5	53.7
C	219	28.8	33.5	87.2
D	63	8.3	9.6	96.8
F	21	2.8	3.2	100.0
Don't Know	102	13.4	****	100.0
No Answer	4	0.5	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
USE OF TAX DOLLARS				
A	66	8.7	10.5	10.5
B	212	27.9	33.6	44.1
C	220	28.9	34.9	78.9
D	99	13.0	15.7	94.6
F	34	4.5	5.4	100.0
Don't Know	119	15.7	****	100.0
No Answer	10	1.3	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

Opinions of What Schools are Doing Best

When asked in an open-ended question, "What are the public schools in your school district doing best?", approximately one-fifth of the sample mentioned general education (Table 8). Other items mentioned by 5 percent or more of the sample were: sports/athletics, good teachers, extracurricular activities, preparing students for jobs, curriculum offerings, preparing students for college, treating students as people, and building character.

Characteristics of Best Teachers

The respondents were also asked to "Please think about the best teacher you know or have known. What were the characteristics that make that teacher outstanding?" Many of the respondents mentioned several characteristics for the outstanding teacher. General categories were formed, and if a portion of the answers covered a specific category, it was coded into that category. A maximum of three coding categories was used for a given response. Most often mentioned in the responses were good personality, patient, friendly, kind and understanding (Table 9). The next general category approaching one-fourth of the sample was the ability to discipline, be strict, firm and fair. The next three categories were: likes children, concern for them, gets along with children (21%); ability to communicate, makes a good presentation, gets subject across(19%); and dedication, enthusiasm, devotion (19%).

Ten to 15 percent of the sample gave responses in the following categories: interest in student learning, creating learning experience; knowledgeable, knows subject; interest in individual student and the ability to inspire, motivate.

TABLE 8. WHAT ARE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT DOING BEST?

	NUMBER	% of 760*
General Education	142	18.7
Sports/Athletics	110	14.5
Good Teachers	75	9.9
Extracurricular Activities	73	9.6
Preparing Students for Jobs, Business, etc.	62	8.2
Curriculum Offerings	54	7.1
Preparing Students for College	45	5.9
Treating Students as People	44	5.8
Building Character	40	5.3
Counseling and Guidance	36	4.7
Special Education	26	3.4
Elementary Level Good	23	3.0
Everything	19	2.5
Learning Atmosphere	16	2.1
Good Use of Tax Dollars - Good Budgeting	16	2.1
Good Administration - Management	10	1.3
Other Responses With Less Than 10/Group	44	5.8
Nothing is Good	13	1.7
Negative Responses	34	4.5
Don't Know - No Answer	175	23.0

* Figures add to more than 760 and 100% because of multiple answers.

TABLE 9. CHARACTERISTICS OF BEST TEACHER

	NUMBER	% of 760*
Good Personality, Patient, Friendly, Kind, Understanding	221	29.1
The Ability to Discipline, Be Strict, Firm, and Fair	181	23.8
Loves Children, Likes Children Concern for Them, Gets Along With	159	20.9
Ability to Communicate, Good Presentation, Get Subject Across	146	19.2
Dedication, Enthusiasm, Devotion	143	18.8
Interest in Student Learning; Creating Learning Experience	113	14.9
Knowledgeable, Knows Subject	102	13.4
Interest in Individual Student	99	13.0
Ability to Inspire, Motivate	74	9.7
Moral Character, Integrity, Honest	52	6.8
Wants To See Students Do Well in Life	14	1.8
Concern With Parent Communication	11	1.5
Personal Appearance	6	0.8
Building Confidence and Self-Esteem	5	0.7
Athletic Ability	3	0.4
Don't Know/No Answer	62	8.2

* Figures add to more than 760 and 100% because of multiple answers.

Comparison of Education with Other Services

As presented earlier, the overall evaluations of elementary, secondary, and higher education were generally quite positive. It is possible to compare the evaluation of educational programs with those of other community services. Respondents graded six community services that affect the quality of life on a scale of A through F. Fire protection and health services received the most positive ratings and public transportation the poorest (Table 10). Grades assigned to education (Tables 3-5) compare favorably with those assigned to the two highest ranked community services. Community social services, recreational facilities, and police protection were also evaluated above average by about one-half of the respondents.

TABLE 10. RATING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

		NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
HEALTH SERVICES					
A		200	26.3	28.3	28.3
B		250	32.9	35.4	63.6
C		190	25.0	26.9	90.5
D		57	7.5	8.1	98.6
F		10	1.3	1.4	100.0
Don´t Know		43	5.7	****	100.0
No Answer		10	1.3	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION					
A		108	14.2	15.4	15.4
B		149	19.6	21.3	36.7
C		197	25.9	28.1	64.8
D		124	16.3	17.7	82.5
F		123	16.2	17.5	100.0
Don´t Know		42	5.5	****	100.0
No Answer		17	2.2	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
SOCIAL SERVICES					
A		101	13.3	14.9	14.9
B		241	31.7	35.5	50.4
C		241	31.7	35.5	85.9
D		74	9.7	10.9	96.8
F		22	2.9	3.2	100.0
Don´t Know		71	9.3	****	100.0
No Answer		10	1.3	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 10. RATING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES (Continued)

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
POLICE PROTECTION				
A	106	13.9	14.5	14.5
B	243	32.0	33.2	47.7
C	228	30.0	31.1	78.8
D	113	14.9	15.4	94.3
F	42	5.5	5.7	100.0
Don't Know	18	2.4	****	100.0
No Answer	10	1.3	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
FIRE PROTECTION				
A	281	37.0	38.2	38.2
B	304	40.0	41.4	79.6
C	122	16.1	16.6	96.2
D	24	3.2	3.3	99.5
F	4	0.5	0.5	100.0
Don't Know	15	2.0	****	100.0
No Answer	10	1.3	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
LEISURE AND RECREATION SERVICES				
A	123	16.2	16.8	16.8
B	234	30.8	31.9	48.7
C	215	28.3	29.3	78.0
D	108	14.2	14.7	92.8
F	53	7.0	7.2	100.0
Don't Know	17	2.2	****	100.0
No Answer	10	1.3	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

Goals of Public Education

Increasingly over the past century, American public schools have assumed responsibility for instructing students in some areas of life that were previously managed by other institutions such as the family or church. Consequently, as schools undertake diverse instructional tasks, there may be differing opinions among citizens about the most appropriate tasks for schools.

Respondents indicated the importance which nine educational goals should have in their local schools. Goals shown in Table 11 were ranked on a scale of 0 to 10 with zero meaning "not at all important" and ten, "very important". Developing skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening were ranked as most important (10) by three-fourths of the sample. It is perhaps not surprising that basic skills were ranked as very important goals of public education by a majority of the respondents. Other less academic activities such as teaching citizenship, teaching students to respect and get along with others, and developing a desire for lifelong learning were also viewed among the most important goals of public education (Table 11). Specific daily living skills, such as teaching students to be good managers of money and resources or teaching skills of family living, were less often ranked among the most important goals of education. Presumably, respondents assign responsibility for teaching these skills to groups other than the public schools.

Only 36 percent of the respondents believed that developing skills to enter a specific field of work should be among the most important goals of education. Yet, as indicated in Table 7, less than half believed the schools were doing an above average job of preparing students for jobs after high school.

TABLE 11. GOALS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
TEACHING STUDENTS TO BE GOOD CITIZENS				
0 Not Important at All	3	0.4	0.4	0.4
1 Thru 3	19	2.5	2.5	2.9
4 Thru 6	78	10.3	10.4	13.4
7 Thru 9	196	25.8	26.2	39.5
10 Very Important	453	59.6	60.5	100.0
No Answer	11	1.4	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
DEVELOPING SKILLS IN READING, WRITING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING				
1 Thru 3	14	1.8	1.9	1.9
4 Thru 6	26	3.4	3.5	5.3
7 Thru 9	149	19.6	19.8	25.2
10 Very Important	562	73.9	74.8	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
TEACHING THE SKILLS OF FAMILY LIVING				
0 Not Important at All	14	1.8	1.9	1.9
1 Thru 3	41	5.4	5.5	7.3
4 Thru 6	125	16.4	16.7	24.0
7 Thru 9	291	38.3	38.9	62.9
10 Very Important	278	36.6	37.1	100.0
No Answer	11	1.4	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 11. GOALS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Continued)

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
TEACHING STUDENTS TO RESPECT AND GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE WITH WHOM THEY WORK AND LIVE				
0 Not Important at All	8	1.1	1.1	1.1
1 Thru 3	16	2.1	2.1	3.2
4 Thru 6	56	7.4	7.5	10.7
7 Thru 9	209	27.5	27.8	38.5
10 Very Important	462	60.8	61.5	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
DEVELOPING SKILLS TO ENTER A SPECIFIC FIELD OF WORK				
0 Not Important at All	3	0.4	0.4	0.4
1 Thru 3	31	4.1	4.1	4.5
4 Thru 6	123	16.2	16.4	20.9
7 Thru 9	322	42.4	42.9	63.8
10 Very Important	272	35.8	36.2	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
TEACHING STUDENTS HOW TO USE LEISURE TIME				
0 Not Important at All	44	5.8	5.9	5.9
1 Thru 3	90	11.8	12.0	17.8
4 Thru 6	223	29.3	29.7	47.5
7 Thru 9	257	33.8	34.2	81.8
10 Very Important	137	18.0	18.2	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 11. GOALS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Continued)

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
TEACHING THE PRINCIPLES OF HEALTH AND SAFETY				
0 Not Important at All	6	0.8	0.8	0.8
1 Thru 3	29	3.8	3.9	4.7
4 Thru 6	149	19.6	19.8	24.5
7 Thru 9	306	40.3	40.7	65.2
10 Very Important	261	34.3	34.8	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
TEACHING STUDENTS HOW TO BE GOOD MANAGERS OF MONEY, PROPERTY AND RESOURCES				
0 Not Important at All	10	1.3	1.3	1.3
1 Thru 3	22	2.9	2.9	4.3
4 Thru 6	93	12.2	12.4	16.7
7 Thru 9	286	37.6	38.2	54.9
10 Very Important	338	44.5	45.1	100.0
No Answer	11	1.4	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
DEVELOPING A DESIRE FOR LEARNING NOW AND IN THE FUTURE				
0 Not Important at All	2	0.3	0.3	0.3
1 Thru 3	21	2.8	2.8	3.1
4 Thru 6	57	7.5	7.6	10.7
7 Thru 9	224	29.5	29.8	40.5
10 Very Important	447	58.8	59.5	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

Problems in Local Schools

Iowans identified discipline as the most serious problem in their schools. When asked the question, "What do you believe is the most serious problem in the public schools in your district?", 27 percent named discipline. Drug abuse was mentioned by 15 percent as the most serious problem. Both discipline and drug abuse were also identified by a national sample as the most serious problems facing schools. After these two issues, there was little agreement on other problems mentioned by respondents in the Iowa study. Quality of teachers (difficulty in getting and keeping good teachers) was the third most frequently cited problem although it was noted by only 8 percent. The wide range of difficulties observed by participants in the study are evident in Table 12.

In response to another question, respondents rated the seriousness of 14 selected problems in their local districts. Problems were rated on a scale from 0 to 10 with zero indicating no problem and ten referring to a very serious problem. Alcohol, drug abuse, and discipline were again identified as very serious problems in response to this question (Table 13). The remaining possible problem areas were not rated as serious as these three areas.

There was some agreement on potential difficulties that were not rated as serious problems in their own districts. For example, physical facilities and size of classes were seldom identified as serious problems. Nearly 15 percent of the sample did not respond to the item concerning collective bargaining for teachers. Since "don't know" was not a response category for these questions, some of the no answers may indicate a lack of information needed to assign an importance rating to some of the items.

TABLE 12. WHAT IS THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT?

	NUMBER	PERCENT
Discipline in Schools	202	26.6
Drug Abuse	112	14.7
Quality of Teachers; Difficulty in Getting Good Teachers	64	8.4
Lack of Course Offerings; Poor Curriculum	38	5.0
Administrative Problems	27	3.6
Teacher Does Not Have Power, Authority	24	3.2
Teacher Not Giving Students Individual Attention	20	2.6
Lack of Students' Interest in Learning	20	2.6
Overemphasis on Athletics	20	2.6
Alcohol Abuse	19	2.5
Amount of Financial Support for Schools	18	2.4
Declining Enrollment	18	2.4
Lack of Involvement and Participation by Parents	17	2.2
School Facilities and Equipment/Buildings, School Buses	10	1.3
Size of Classes	10	1.3
No Problems	10	1.3
Other Responses With Less Than 10/Group	59	7.8
Don't Know	27	3.6
Undesignated	72	5.9
TOTAL	760	100.0

TABLE 13. SERIOUSNESS OF PROBLEMS IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS				
0 No Problem at All	31	4.1	4.2	4.2
1 Thru 3	154	20.3	21.1	25.3
4 Thru 6	272	35.8	37.2	62.5
7 Thru 9	209	27.5	28.6	91.1
10 Very Serious Problem	65	8.6	8.9	100.0
No Answer	29	3.8	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS				
0 No Problem at All	69	9.1	9.7	9.7
1 Thru 3	225	29.6	31.7	41.5
4 Thru 6	262	34.5	37.0	78.4
7 Thru 9	137	18.0	19.3	97.7
10 Very Serious Problem	16	2.1	2.3	100.0
No Answer	51	6.7	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
SCHOOL FACILITIES IN GENERAL				
0 No Problem at All	115	15.1	15.6	15.6
1 Thru 3	326	42.9	44.2	59.8
4 Thru 6	184	24.2	24.9	84.7
7 Thru 9	92	12.1	12.5	97.2
10 Very Serious Problem	21	2.8	2.8	100.0
No Answer	22	2.9	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 13. SERIOUSNESS OF PROBLEMS IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Continued)

		NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
ALCOHOL ABUSE					
0 No Problem at All		35	4.6	4.9	4.9
1 Thru 3		123	16.2	17.3	22.2
4 Thru 6		247	32.5	34.7	57.0
7 Thru 9		242	31.8	34.0	91.0
10 Very Serious Problem		64	8.4	9.0	100.0
No Answer		49	6.4	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
DRUG ABUSE					
0 No Problem at All		25	3.3	3.4	3.4
1 Thru 3		114	15.0	15.7	19.1
4 Thru 6		242	31.8	33.2	52.3
7 Thru 9		256	33.7	35.2	87.5
10 Very Serious Problem		91	12.0	12.5	100.0
No Answer		32	4.2	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
LACK OF PUBLIC INTEREST					
0 No Problem at All		56	7.4	7.6	7.6
1 Thru 3		183	24.1	24.9	32.5
4 Thru 6		271	35.7	36.9	69.4
7 Thru 9		183	24.1	24.9	94.3
10 Very Serious Problem		42	5.5	5.7	100.0
No Answer		25	3.3	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 13. SERIOUSNESS OF PROBLEMS IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Continued)

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING OF TEACHERS				
0 No Problem at All	96	12.6	14.9	14.9
1 Thru 3	229	30.1	35.5	50.4
4 Thru 6	226	29.7	35.0	85.4
7 Thru 9	81	10.7	12.6	98.0
10 Very Serious Problem	13	1.7	2.0	100.0
No Answer	115	15.1	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
LACK OF STUDENTS' INTEREST IN LEARNING				
0 No Problem at All	21	2.8	2.9	2.9
1 Thru 3	179	23.6	24.8	27.7
4 Thru 6	312	41.1	43.3	71.0
7 Thru 9	176	23.2	24.4	95.4
10 Very Serious Problem	33	4.3	4.6	100.0
No Answer	39	5.1	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
SIZE OF CLASSES				
0 No Problem at All	149	19.6	21.1	21.1
1 Thru 3	259	34.1	36.6	57.7
4 Thru 6	199	26.2	28.1	85.9
7 Thru 9	82	10.8	11.6	97.5
10 Very Serious Problem	18	2.4	2.5	100.0
No Answer	53	7.0	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 13. SERIOUSNESS OF PROBLEMS IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Continued)

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES				
0 No Problem at All	69	9.1	10.2	10.2
1 Thru 3	230	30.3	34.0	44.2
4 Thru 6	248	32.6	36.6	80.8
7 Thru 9	104	13.7	15.4	96.2
10 Very Serious Problem	26	3.4	3.8	100.0
No Answer	83	10.9	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
LACK OF INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION BY PARENTS				
0 No Problem at All	45	5.9	6.3	6.3
1 Thru 3	168	22.1	23.4	29.7
4 Thru 6	269	35.4	37.5	67.1
7 Thru 9	206	27.1	28.7	95.8
10 Very Serious Problem	30	3.9	4.2	100.0
No Answer	42	5.5	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY				
0 No Problem at All	73	9.6	10.1	10.1
1 Thru 3	246	32.4	33.9	43.9
4 Thru 6	247	32.5	34.0	78.0
7 Thru 9	126	16.6	17.4	95.3
10 Very Serious Problem	34	4.5	4.7	100.0
No Answer	34	4.5	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 13. SERIOUSNESS OF PROBLEMS IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Continued)

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
LACK OF CLASSES AND PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS				
0 No Problem at All	160	21.1	22.1	22.1
1 Thru 3	278	36.6	38.3	60.4
4 Thru 6	156	20.5	21.5	81.9
7 Thru 9	91	12.0	12.6	94.5
10 Very Serious Problem	40	5.3	5.5	100.0
No Answer	35	4.6	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
BUSING FOR THE PURPOSE OF INTEGRATION				
0 No Problem at All	492	64.7	68.7	68.7
1 Thru 3	114	15.0	15.9	84.6
4 Thru 6	49	6.4	6.8	91.5
7 Thru 9	31	4.1	4.3	95.8
10 Very Serious Problem	30	3.9	4.2	100.0
No Answer	44	5.8	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

Improving the Quality of Education

Presumably, problems in the educational setting might interfere with the accomplishment of educational goals. In addition to information about perceived problems and goals for public education, respondents were asked what the public schools in their communities could do to improve the quality of education. Perhaps not surprisingly, both goals and perceived educational problems were reflected in the suggested improvements.

In general, there was little agreement among respondents to an open-ended question about what action the schools should take to improve their programs (Table 14). There was most agreement on the need to teach more of the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic (14 percent). Improving the quality of teachers or obtaining better teachers and maintaining stricter discipline in the schools were also suggested improvements. Both discipline and the quality of teachers were also identified as problems. In all, respondents gave more than 42 different suggestions for improvement; however, except for basic skills, discipline, and teacher quality, there was little consensus.

The problem of financing public schools is of great concern to Iowa citizens. With increasing inflation and the possibility of decreasing income the reality of reducing expenditures for education needs to be carefully examined. If expenditures had to be reduced, reduction in sports and extracurricular activities were the most often mentioned areas (Table 15). This was followed by reduced busing and reduction of administrative costs.

Respondents also gave their opinions about changes or possible changes in other school programs and procedures. The extent to which respondents

indicated changes in selected educational programs and procedures are shown in Table 16. In the comparison of present educational practices with their own preparation, about one-half felt that students today receive a better elementary education (55 percent). Fifty two percent felt that students today receive a better secondary education. Nearly one-half of the sample felt the reports from Iowa schools to parents were adequate. Twenty nine percent did not feel that the reports were adequate, and 22 percent were undecided.

There was little support for extending public school programs to younger age groups. Sixty-two percent believed that Iowa public schools should not offer a program for 4-year-olds while 88 percent believed that programs for 3-year-olds should not be provided. Two other recommendations for change that would affect both teachers and students received support; 80 percent agreed that those wishing to become teachers should be required to pass a state board examination on the subject they will teach in addition to meeting college requirements for a teacher's certificate. There were also recommended changes for students with over two-thirds agreeing that students should be required to pass competency tests before graduating from Iowa high schools.

TABLE 14. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS THE MAIN THING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY CAN DO TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION?

	NUMBER	% of 760*
Teach Basics - Reading, Writing, Arithmetic	106	14.0
Improve Quality of Teachers - Better Teachers	105	13.8
More Strict Discipline	72	9.5
Improve Individual Attention	63	8.3
Improve Job Preparation	54	7.1
Improve Counseling	49	6.5
Good	45	4.9
More Extensive Curriculum	43	5.7
Improve Communication	41	5.4
Improve Teaching Methods	28	3.7
Cut Sports and Extracurricular Activities	28	3.7
Reduce Class Size	27	3.6
Administration	24	3.2
Special Programs - Gifted, Talented, Handicapped, Slower	22	2.9
Parental Involvement	21	2.8
More Money/Financial	15	2.0
School Board	14	1.9
Improve Social Life	13	1.7
Improve College Preparation	13	1.7
More New Buildings, Equipment, etc.	12	1.6
Higher Standards	10	1.3
Community Involvement	10	1.3
Other Answers - 10 or less/group	58	7.3
Don't Know/No Answer	158	20.8

* Figures add to more than 760 and 100% because of multiple answers.

TABLE 15. IF EXPENDITURES IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT HAD TO BE REDUCED, WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND BE DONE?

	NUMBER	% OF 760*
Drop (Reduce, Eliminate) Sports	201	26.5
Reduce (Eliminate) Some Extracurricular Activities	98	12.9
Reduce Busing	67	8.8
Cut Administration, Administrative Salaries, Red Tape	52	6.8
Reduce Transportation for Sports and Extracurricular Activities	37	4.9
Cut Teacher Salaries, Teachers	35	4.6
Repair Old Buildings, Don't Build New Ones; Reorganize Sports Conferences	30	4.0
Reorganize District; Merge with Another School	30	4.0
Cut Down Classroom Materials and Equipment; Playground	26	3.4
Eliminate Non-Essential Positions	24	3.2
Reduce Non-Essential Services	23	3.0
Merge Classes	14	1.8
Cut Down on Buying New Books Each Year	13	1.7
Cut Energy Costs - Heat, Lights	13	1.7
Shorter Hours	12	1.6
Cut Shop and Home Economics	12	1.6
Better Budgeting	10	1.3
Other Answers - 10 or less/group	44	12.0
Nothing Can Be Done	33	4.3
Don't Know/No Answer	200	26.3

* Figures add to more than 760 and 100% because of multiple answers.

TABLE 16. AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

AGREEMENT	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
STUDENTS TODAY RECEIVE A BETTER ELEMENTARY EDUCATION THAN I DID				
Strongly Agree	106	13.9	14.2	14.2
Agree	310	40.8	41.4	55.5
Undecided	101	13.3	13.5	69.0
Disagree	185	24.3	24.7	93.7
Strongly Disagree	47	6.2	6.3	100.0
No Answer	11	1.4	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
STUDENTS TODAY RECEIVE A BETTER SECONDARY EDUCATION THAN I DID				
Strongly Agree	88	11.6	11.7	11.7
Agree	302	39.7	40.2	51.9
Undecided	132	17.4	17.6	69.5
Disagree	188	24.7	25.0	94.5
Strongly Disagree	41	5.4	5.5	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
REPORTS FROM IOWA SCHOOLS TO PARENTS ARE ADEQUATE				
Strongly Agree	22	2.9	3.0	3.0
Agree	337	44.3	45.4	48.3
Undecided	164	21.6	22.1	70.4
Disagree	199	26.2	26.8	97.2
Strongly Disagree	21	2.8	2.8	100.0
No Answer	17	2.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 16. AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES (Continued)

AGREEMENT	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS SHOULD OFFER A PROGRAM FOR 4 YEAR OLDS				
Strongly Agree	38	5.0	5.1	5.1
Agree	158	20.8	21.0	26.1
Undecided	92	12.1	12.3	38.3
Disagree	307	40.4	40.9	79.2
Strongly Disagree	156	20.5	20.8	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS SHOULD OFFER A PROGRAM FOR 3 YEAR OLDS				
Strongly Agree	7	0.9	0.9	0.9
Agree	23	3.0	3.1	4.0
Undecided	61	8.0	8.1	12.1
Disagree	367	48.3	48.8	60.9
Strongly Disagree	294	38.7	39.1	100.0
No Answer	8	1.1	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 16. AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES (Continued)

AGREEMENT	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
IN ADDITION TO MEETING COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS FOR A TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE THOSE WISHING TO BE TEACHERS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO PASS A STATE BOARD EXAMINATION ON THE SUBJECTS THEY WILL TEACH				
Strongly Agree	215	28.3	28.6	28.6
Agree	388	51.1	51.6	80.2
Undecided	73	9.6	9.7	89.9
Disagree	60	7.9	8.0	97.9
Strongly Disagree	16	2.1	2.1	100.0
No Answer	8	1.1	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
STUDENTS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO PASS COMPETENCY TESTS BEFORE GRADUATING FROM IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS				
Strongly Agree	165	21.7	22.0	22.0
Agree	355	46.7	47.4	69.4
Undecided	120	15.8	16.0	85.4
Disagree	93	12.2	12.4	97.9
Strongly Disagree	16	2.1	2.1	100.0
No Answer	11	1.4	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

Sources of Information about Schools

There are numerous ways in which persons may obtain information about the activities and programs of the public schools. There was an interest in identifying the sources of information individuals used most often to learn about school programs and activities and the sources which they indicated were most important. Respondents were asked whether they received information about those programs and activities from the 13 sources shown in Table 17.

Local newspapers, talking with others in the community, and talking with parents of school age children provided information about the schools for over 90 percent of the respondents. Students other than the respondents' own children were sources of information for more persons (71 percent) than were their own children (51 percent). The lower percentage of respondents who obtained information from their own children as compared to some of the other sources probably reflects the fact that only 38 percent of the sample had children in school at the time of the study.

Radio and television were used much less often (54 percent and 40 percent, respectively) than were newspapers (85 percent).

The extent to which school personnel were sources of information varied considerably by type of contact. For example, personal conversations with teachers were cited more than were parent-teacher conferences. School publications and newsletters provided information about the schools for more than 60 percent. Personal contact with administrators was a source of information for 39 percent of the

respondents. However, school board meetings and parent-teacher organization meetings were least often used to learn about school programs and activities (23 and 19 percent, respectively).

When individuals identified the single source that was most informative, local newspapers were mentioned more than any other source (18 percent, Table 18) followed by personal contact with parents of school age children (13 percent). The most informative sources, however, varied considerably across individuals. No source of information was rated as most important by even 25 percent of the sample. This suggests that the public obtains information about the public schools from a wide range of sources. Contacts with persons directly involved in the schools, however, were most important sources of information for several respondents.

TABLE 17. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
TALKING WITH YOUR CHILDREN				
No	360	47.4	48.1	48.1
Yes	388	51.1	51.9	100.0
No Answer	12	1.6	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
TALKING WITH STUDENTS OTHER THAN YOUR CHILDREN				
No	214	28.2	28.5	28.5
Yes	538	70.8	71.5	100.0
No Answer	8	1.1	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
TALKING WITH PARENTS OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN				
No	112	14.7	14.9	14.9
Yes	639	84.1	85.1	100.0
No Answer	9	1.2	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
TALKING WITH TEACHERS				
No	277	36.4	36.8	36.8
Yes	475	62.5	63.2	100.0
No Answer	8	1.1	****	100.0
No				
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
TALKING WITH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS				
No	455	59.9	60.7	60.7
Yes	294	38.7	39.3	100.0
No Answer	11	1.4	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 17. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES (Continued)

		NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
TALKING WITH OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY					
No		105	13.8	14.0	14.0
Yes		645	84.9	86.0	100.0
No Answer		10	1.3	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
RADIO					
No		339	44.6	45.3	45.3
Yes		410	53.9	54.7	100.0
No Answer		11	1.4	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
LOCAL NEWSPAPERS					
No		109	14.3	14.5	14.5
Yes		643	84.6	85.5	100.0
No Answer		8	1.1	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
TELEVISION					
No		441	58.0	59.0	59.0
Yes		306	40.3	41.0	100.0
No Answer		13	1.7	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 17. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES (Continued)

		NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS AND NEWSLETTERS					
No		292	38.4	38.9	38.9
Yes		459	60.4	61.1	100.0
No Answer		9	1.2	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES					
No		455	59.9	60.7	60.7
Yes		295	38.8	39.3	100.0
No Answer		10	1.3	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION MEETINGS					
No		608	80.0	81.1	81.1
Yes		142	18.7	18.9	100.0
No Answer		10	1.3	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	
SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS					
No		571	75.1	76.5	76.5
Yes		175	23.0	23.5	100.0
No Answer		14	1.8	****	100.0
	TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 18. MOST VALUABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

	NUMBER	RELATIVE (PCT)	ADJUSTED (PCT)	CUM (PCT)
Talking With Your Children	83	10.9	11.4	11.4
Talking With Students Other Than Your Children	56	7.4	7.7	19.1
Talking With Parents of School Age Children	100	13.2	13.8	32.9
Talking With Teachers	86	11.3	11.8	44.7
Talking With School Administrators	25	3.3	3.4	48.1
Talking With Others In The Community	34	4.5	4.7	52.8
Radio	21	2.8	2.9	55.7
Local Newspapers	137	18.0	18.8	74.6
Television	20	2.6	2.8	77.3
School Publications and Newsletters	82	10.8	11.3	88.6
Parent-Teacher Conferences	48	6.3	6.6	95.2
Parent-Teacher Organization Meetings	12	1.6	1.7	96.8
School Board Meetings	18	2.4	2.5	99.3
No Answer	38	5.0	****	100.0
TOTAL	760	100.0	100.0	

Relationship of Children's Educational Experience to Evaluations

In this section, the relationship of children's educational experience to the evaluation of grades of schools is examined. In general, it was felt that contact with or participation in school activities could influence the grades assigned.

Having children presently in school was directly related to grades assigned to public elementary schools, area community colleges, Iowa public universities, and Iowa private colleges and universities. For elementary schools, those having children presently in school gave more A or B answers and fewer "don't know" answers. For area community colleges, Iowa public universities, and Iowa private colleges, there was a trend for fewer A or B grades and more "don't know" answers if respondents had children presently in school.

For public elementary schools, the major increases in percent of A or B grades and decreases in percent of "don't knows" occurred when the respondent's children had attended public elementary or secondary schools or public universities. The same trend may be noted for public secondary schools.

For the area community college, the major increase in percent of A and B grades and decrease in "don't know" answers were when the respondent's children had attended area community colleges and public universities. Iowa public schools received more A or B grades if children of respondents had attended public universities in Iowa.

For Iowa public universities, there was a tendency for the percentage of A and B grades to increase and percentage of "don't know" answers to decrease if children had attended public universities or private colleges or universities. For private colleges or universities, there was a

tendency for the percentage of "don't know" answers to decrease if children had attended parochial secondary schools and private colleges or universities.

In general, it appears that if children had attended the school being graded, there was a tendency for the percentage of A and B grades to increase and the percentage of "don't know" answers to decrease. For all schools, the percentage of A or B grades was higher and the percentage of "don't know" answers was lower than the total sample if children had attended Iowa public universities. Also, this general trend of increased A or B grades and decreased "don't knows" was present, but not as pronounced, if children had attended private colleges or universities.

TABLE 19. EVALUATION OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BY CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

	GRADES					
	A	B	C	D or F	Don't Know	TOTAL
Public Sample	127	325	149	18	136	755
	16.8	43.0	19.7	2.4	18.0	100.0
Children Presently in School	56	140	57	10	22	285
	19.6	49.1	20.0	3.5	7.7	100.0
CHILDREN HAVE EVER ATTENDED:						
Public Elementary School	94	219	87	15	50	465
	20.2	47.1	18.7	3.2	10.8	100.0
Parochial Elementary School	15	33	19	1	14	82
	18.3	40.2	23.2	1.2	17.1	100.0
Public Secondary School	66	151	61	12	40	330
	20.0	45.8	18.5	3.6	12.1	100.0
Parochial Secondary School	7	14	10	0	10	41
	17.1	34.1	24.4	0.0	24.4	100.0
Trade, Business, Technical School	11	31	10	3	11	66
	16.7	47.0	15.2	4.5	16.7	100.0
Area Community College	19	47	24	3	15	108
	17.6	43.5	22.2	2.8	13.9	100.0
Public Universities	31	59	19	5	17	131
	23.7	45.0	14.5	3.8	13.0	100.0
Private Colleges or Universities	17	43	13	3	15	91
	18.7	47.3	14.3	3.3	16.5	100.0

TABLE 20. EVALUATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

	GRADES					
	A	B	C	D or F	Don't Know	TOTAL
Public Sample	76	287	198	37	156	754
	10.1	38.1	26.3	4.9	20.7	100.0
Children Presently in School	28	111	77	19	50	285
	9.8	38.9	27.0	6.7	17.5	100.0
CHILDREN HAVE EVER ATTENDED:						
Public Elementary School	57	186	118	24	78	463
	12.3	40.2	25.5	5.2	16.8	100.0
Parochial Elementary School	10	26	25	3	18	82
	12.2	31.7	30.5	3.7	22.0	100.0
Public Secondary School	45	143	85	19	36	328
	13.7	43.6	25.9	5.8	11.0	100.0
Parochial Secondary School	6	13	12	1	9	41
	14.6	31.7	29.3	2.4	22.0	100.0
Trade, Business, Technical School	7	26	17	6	10	66
	10.6	39.4	25.8	9.1	15.2	100.0
Area Community College	16	43	30	4	14	107
	15.0	40.2	28.0	3.7	13.1	100.0
Public Universities	21	58	34	5	12	130
	16.2	44.6	26.2	3.8	9.2	100.0
Private Colleges or Universities	10	43	22	3	13	91
	11.0	47.3	24.2	3.3	14.3	100.0

TABLE 21. EVALUATION OF AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGES BY CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

	GRADES					
	A	B	C	D or F	Don't Know	TOTAL
Public Sample	178	251	81	14	230	754
	23.6	33.3	10.7	1.9	30.5	100.0
Children Presently in School	61	88	33	1	102	285
	21.4	30.9	11.6	0.4	35.8	100.0
CHILDREN HAVE EVER ATTENDED:						
Public Elementary School	115	149	47	6	146	463
	24.8	32.2	10.2	1.3	31.5	100.0
Parochial Elementary School	20	25	7	1	29	82
	24.4	30.5	8.5	1.2	35.4	100.0
Public Secondary School	89	110	27	6	97	329
	27.1	33.4	8.2	1.8	29.5	100.0
Parochial Secondary School	12	15	4	1	9	41
	29.3	36.6	9.8	2.4	22.0	100.0
Trade, Business, Technical School	13	24	9	1	19	66
	19.7	36.4	13.6	1.5	28.8	100.0
Area Community College	27	45	12	1	23	108
	25.0	41.7	11.1	0.9	21.3	100.0
Public Universities	42	48	11	1	27	129
	32.6	37.2	8.5	0.8	20.9	100.0
Private Colleges or Universities	23	31	9	0	27	90
	25.6	34.4	10.0	0.0	30.0	100.0

TABLE 22. EVALUATION OF IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN GENERAL BY CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

	GRADES					
	A	B	C	D or F	Don't Know	TOTAL
Public Sample	75	352	197	17	114	755
	9.9	46.6	26.1	2.3	15.1	100.0
Children Presently in School	19	140	75	6	44	284
	6.7	49.3	26.4	2.1	15.5	100.0
CHILDREN HAVE EVER ATTENDED:						
Public Elementary School	45	224	116	12	67	464
	9.7	48.3	25.0	2.6	14.4	100.0
Parochial Elementary School	6	37	22	2	15	82
	7.3	45.1	26.8	2.4	18.3	100.0
Public Secondary School	32	160	82	9	47	330
	9.7	48.5	24.8	2.7	14.2	100.0
Parochial Secondary School	5	16	12	1	7	41
	12.2	39.0	29.3	2.4	17.1	100.0
Trade, Business, Technical School	7	32	17	0	10	66
	10.6	48.5	25.8	0.0	15.2	100.0
Area Community College	8	51	30	2	17	108
	7.4	47.2	27.8	1.9	15.7	100.0
Public Universities	15	72	32	2	10	131
	11.5	55.0	24.4	1.5	7.6	100.0
Private Colleges or Universities	6	49	26	1	9	91
	6.6	53.8	28.6	1.1	9.9	100.0

TABLE 23. EVALUATION OF IOWA PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES BY CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

	GRADES					
	A	B	C	D or F	Don't Know	TOTAL
Public Sample	182	297	91	5	182	757
	24.0	39.2	12.0	0.7	24.0	100.0
Children Presently in School	52	117	27	4	85	285
	18.2	41.1	9.5	1.4	29.8	100.0
CHILDREN HAVE EVER ATTENDED:						
Public Elementary School	105	184	56	4	116	465
	22.6	39.6	12.0	0.9	24.9	100.0
Parochial Elementary School	14	34	12	0	22	82
	17.1	41.5	14.6	0.0	26.8	100.0
Public Secondary School	79	135	42	2	72	330
	23.9	40.9	12.7	0.6	21.8	100.0
Parochial Secondary School	7	18	8	0	8	41
	17.1	43.9	19.5	0.0	19.5	100.0
Trade, Business, Technical School	14	28	10	0	14	66
	21.2	42.4	15.2	0.0	21.2	100.0
Area Community College	23	42	19	0	24	108
	21.3	38.9	17.6	0.0	22.2	100.0
Public Universities	41	61	17	0	12	131
	31.3	46.6	13.0	0.0	9.2	100.0
Private Colleges or Universities	17	49	16	0	9	91
	18.7	53.8	17.6	0.0	9.9	100.0

TABLE 24. EVALUATION OF IOWA PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES BY CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

	GRADES					
	A	B	C	D or F	Don't Know	TOTAL
Public Sample	106	283	83	8	277	757
	14.0	37.4	11.0	1.1	36.6	100.0
Children Presently in School	35	103	32	0	115	285
	12.3	36.1	11.2	0.0	40.4	100.0
CHILDREN HAVE EVER ATTENDED:						
Public Elementary School	63	169	51	3	179	465
	13.5	36.3	11.0	0.6	38.5	100.0
Parochial Elementary School	13	35	7	1	26	82
	15.9	42.7	8.5	1.2	31.7	100.0
Public Secondary School	47	128	37	1	117	330
	14.2	38.8	11.2	0.3	35.5	100.0
Parochial Secondary School	4	23	3	2	9	41
	9.8	56.1	7.3	4.9	22.0	100.0
Trade, Business, Technical School	8	28	7	0	23	66
	12.1	42.4	10.6	0.0	34.8	100.0
Area Community College	15	37	14	1	41	108
	13.9	34.3	13.0	0.9	38.0	100.0
Public Universities	22	54	12	2	41	131
	16.8	41.2	9.2	1.5	31.3	100.0
Private Colleges or Universities	17	46	10	2	16	91
	18.7	50.5	11.0	2.2	17.6	100.0

Better Education

This section examines the relationship of demographic variables to the statement, "Students today receive a better elementary education than I did." and "Students today receive a better secondary education than I did." Crosstabulations were made with children presently in school, age, sex, highest educational degree, family income, where respondent presently lives, years in the community and description of self. Only those crosstabulations with significant chi square values are presented in the following tables.

There was found to be a significant relationship between responses to "Students today receive a better elementary education than I did." and the following variables: children in school, age and academic degree. Examination of the findings indicate that respondents who had children presently in school, were between 40 and 49 years old or did not have an educational degree had the highest percentage of agreement with the statement. There was found to be a significant relationship between responses to "Students today receive a better secondary education than I did." and the following variables: children in school, age, academic degree, family income, and years in the community. Highest agreement with the statement occurred when the respondents had children presently in school, were 40 to 49 years old, did not have a diploma or academic degree, had incomes over $30,000, or had lived in their community over 25 years.

TABLE 25. VARIABLES RELATED TO OPINION ON STATEMENT "STUDENTS TODAY RECEIVE A BETTER ELEMENTARY EDUCATION THAN I DID"

	Count / Row Pct	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
CHILDREN IN SCHOOL							
No		46	192	68	125	33	464
		9.9	41.4	14.7	26.9	7.1	
Yes		60	118	31	59	14	282
		21.3	41.8	11.0	20.9	5.0	
	COLUMN TOTAL	106	310	99	184	47	746
		14.2	41.6	13.3	24.7	6.3	100.0
Chi Square = 21.58 With 4 Degrees of Freedom Significance = 0.00							
AGE							
18-29		16	85	37	54	4	196
		8.2	43.4	18.9	27.6	2.0	
30-39		35	78	22	36	8	179
		19.6	43.6	12.3	20.1	4.5	
40-49		23	51	9	20	5	108
		21.3	47.2	8.3	18.5	4.6	
50-65		20	57	19	49	19	164
		12.2	34.8	11.6	29.9	11.6	
Over 65		11	37	10	26	8	92
		12.0	40.2	10.9	28.3	8.7	
	COLUMN TOTAL	105	308	97	185	44	739
		14.2	41.7	13.1	25.0	6.0	100.0
Chi Square = 45.75 With 16 Degrees of Freedom Significance = 0.00							

TABLE 25. VARIABLES RELATED TO OPINION ON STATEMENT "STUDENTS TODAY RECEIVE A BETTER ELEMENTARY EDUCATION THAN I DID" (continued)

Count / Row Pct	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un-decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
HIGHEST DEGREE						
None	17	47	6	18	10	98
	17.3	48.0	6.1	18.4	10.2	
High School	55	170	56	100	21	402
	13.7	42.3	13.9	24.9	5.2	
Business-Assoc.	12	42	14	35	12	115
	10.4	36.5	12.2	30.4	10.4	
College	22	51	24	32	3	132
	16.7	38.6	18.2	24.2	2.3	
COLUMN TOTAL	106	310	100	185	46	747
	14.2	41.5	13.4	24.8	6.2	100.0

Chi Square = 23.77 With 12 Degrees of Freedom Significance = 0.02

TABLE 26. VARIABLES RELATED TO OPINION ON STATEMENT "STUDENTS TODAY RECEIVE A BETTER SECONDARY EDUCATION THAN I DID"

Count / Row Pct	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un-decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
CHILDREN IN SCHOOL						
No	40	179	81	138	26	464
	8.6	38.6	17.5	29.7	5.6	
Yes	48	123	50	48	15	284
	16.9	43.3	17.6	16.9	5.3	
COLUMN TOTAL	88	302	131	186	41	748
	11.8	40.4	17.5	24.9	5.5	100.0

Chi Square = 22.96 With 4 Degrees of Freedom Significance = 0.00

Count / Row Pct	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un-decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
AGE						
18-29	7	63	48	73	7	198
	3.5	31.8	24.2	36.9	3.5	
30-39	26	70	37	38	9	180
	14.4	38.9	20.6	21.1	5.0	
40-49	22	54	11	18	4	109
	20.2	49.5	10.1	16.5	3.7	
50-65	22	69	21	39	13	164
	13.4	42.1	12.8	23.8	7.9	
Over 65	10	42	12	20	6	90
	11.1	46.7	13.3	22.2	6.7	
COLUMN TOTAL	87	298	129	188	39	741
	11.7	40.2	17.4	25.4	5.3	100.0

Chi Square = 58.75 With 16 Degrees of Freedom Significance = 0.00

TABLE 26. VARIABLES RELATED TO OPINION ON STATEMENT "STUDENTS TODAY RECEIVE A BETTER SECONDARY EDUCATION THAN I DID" (continued)

Count / Row Pct	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un-Decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
HIGHEST DEGREE						
None	14 / 14.4	50 / 51.5	8 / 8.2	18 / 18.6	7 / 7.2	97
High School	47 / 11.7	165 / 40.9	79 / 19.6	94 / 23.3	18 / 4.5	403
Business-Assoc.	10 / 8.5	40 / 34.2	18 / 15.4	38 / 32.5	11 / 9.4	117
College	17 / 12.9	47 / 35.6	26 / 19.7	37 / 28.0	5 / 3.8	132
COLUMN TOTAL	88 / 11.7	302 / 40.3	131 / 17.5	187 / 25.0	41 / 5.5	749 / 100.0

Chi Square = 23.52 With 12 Degrees of Freedom Significance = 0.02

Count / Row Pct	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un-Decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
FAMILY INCOME						
Less Than $10000	12 / 7.6	75 / 47.5	29 / 18.4	34 / 21.5	8 / 5.1	158
$10000 To $19999	28 / 10.5	104 / 39.1	47 / 17.7	74 / 27.8	13 / 4.9	266
$20000 To $29999	16 / 9.2	75 / 43.4	30 / 17.3	43 / 24.9	9 / 5.2	173
$30000 And Over	29 / 26.1	34 / 30.6	16 / 14.4	25 / 22.5	7 / 6.3	111
COLUMN TOTAL	85 / 12.0	288 / 40.7	122 / 17.2	176 / 24.9	37 / 5.2	708 / 100.0

Chi Square = 30.45 With 12 Degrees of Freedom Significance = 0.00

TABLE 26. VARIABLES RELATED TO OPINION ON STATEMENT "STUDENTS TODAY RECEIVE A BETTER SECONDARY EDUCATION THAN I DID" (continued)

Count / Row Pct	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un-decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
YEARS IN COMMUNITY						
0 To 5	6	56	32	50	7	151
	4.0	37.1	21.2	33.1	4.6	
6 To 15	21	65	32	42	6	166
	12.7	39.2	19.3	25.3	3.6	
16 To 25	22	54	27	38	9	150
	14.7	36.0	18.0	25.3	6.0	
Over 25	37	126	37	56	18	274
	13.5	46.0	13.5	20.4	6.6	
COLUMN TOTAL	86	301	128	186	40	741
	11.6	40.6	17.3	25.1	5.4	100.0

Chi Square = 25.28 With 12 Degrees of Freedom Significance = 0.01

Summary and Conclusions

An analysis of attitudes toward education in general and Iowa schools and school programs in particular was based on survey responses from 760 Iowans living in 98 of 99 counties. The majority (62%) of the respondents reported no children currently enrolled in school. Approximately one-half (50.8%) were under age 39. Fifty-four percent of the respondents were female. The majority (54%) had graduated from high school and approximately one-third had completed postsecondary programs. In describing themselves, approximately 90% indicated that they were "moderate" to "very conservative".

Iowans have quite positive attitudes toward their local public schools in general. Fifty-six percent of Iowans gave the public schools in Iowa a grade of "A" or "B". Fifty-five percent gave "A" or "B" grades to the the public schools in their local district. Only 35 percent of those responding to a national Gallup Poll gave their local public schools such high marks.

Elementary schools received higher ratings than secondary schools. Approximately 60 percent of the respondents gave "A" or "B" grades to the elementary schools, compared with the 48 percent who rated secondary schools above average. Local school boards and parent-teacher organizations were given lower ratings.

Universities and colleges also received good grades. Sixty-three percent of the sample group gave an "A" or "B" to Iowa's state universities and 56 percent graded the area community colleges above average. Fifty-one percent gave "A" or "B" to private colleges and universities.

Respondents were asked to rate various programs, functions, and personnel in their local schools. Competitive athletics and other extra-

curricular activities received the largest number of "A" or "B" grades. Over one-half of the sample gave "A" or "B" marks for the teaching of basic skills, preparing of students for college and providing for students with special needs at the local level.

Two activities--counseling/vocational guidance and preparing students for jobs after high school--failed to receive above average ratings from at least half the respondents.

Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of those polled judged the quality of teachers in elementary schools as above average, while half put secondary teachers in that category. Administrators and counselors--personnel less likely to have direct contact with a large number of students--were ranked lower.

When examining the replies of only those respondents who assigned grades to schools, school programs and community services, it was found that, 60 percent or more of the respondents gave A or B grades to the following: competitive athletic programs for boys (85%); Iowa public universities (83%); area community colleges (82%); Iowa private colleges and universities (81%); fire protection (80%); other extracurricular activities such as music, drama, student publications speech and debate (79%); competitive athletic programs for girls (74%); public elementary school in their district (73%); quality of elementary teachers (71%); area education agency in their district (71%); Iowa public schools in general (67%); public schools in their district (64%); health services (64%); Iowa State Education Association (63%); State of Iowa Department of Public Instruction (62%); quality of the secondary school teachers (61%); providing for students with special needs (61%) and public secondary school in their district (61%).

When examining only those respondents who assigned grades, 50 percent

or less of the respondents gave A or B grades to leisure and recreation services (49%), their local school board (49%), parent-teacher organization in their district (48%), police protection (48%), counseling and vocational guidance (48%), quality of school counselors (46%), preparing students for jobs after high school (45%), use of tax dollars (44%) and public transportation (37%).

Two-thirds of the total respondents indicated that they were not familiar with Area Education Agency in their district, the State of Iowa Department of Public Instruction, and the Iowa State Education Association.

Since "don't know" could be used if the respondent did not know enough about the group or area to grade it, a comparison of "don't know" responses may provide insights about amount of information about the group or area. Under three percent gave "don't know" responses for police protection, fire protection, and recreation services. Approximately six percent gave "don't know" for health services and public transportation. The only school program or school personnel having approximately six percent (with comparable "don't know" answers) are: teaching of basic skills, (5% competitive athletic programs for boys (5%), competitive athletic programs for girls (6%), other extracurricular activities (6%), and quality of the total learning experience (7%). Within their district, parent-teacher organizations (35%) and area community college (30%) have the highest "don't know" responses. The percentage of these responses were 18 for public elementary schools, 20 for public elementary schools, 20 for public secondary schools, 21 for local school board, 12 for elementary school teachers, 17 for secondary school teachers, and 13 for school administrators.

Many respondents mentioned several characteristics for the person they

thought to be an outstanding teacher. Those categories of responses mentioned most often were good personality, patient, friendly, kind, understanding (29%); the ability to discipline, be strict, firm, and fair (24%); loves children, likes children, concern for them, gets along with (21%); ability to communicate, good presentation, gets subject across (19%); and dedication, enthusiasm, and devotion (19%).

The educational goals having the highest percentages in the most important rating (10) were: developing skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening (74%), teaching students to respect and get along with people with whom they work and live (61%), teaching students to be good citizens (60%) and developing a desire for learning now and in the future (59%).

Discipline, drug abuse and alcohol were identified as the most serious problems in the schools.

Although there was little consensus on what activities schools should undertake to improve their programs, there was agreement for the need to increase the emphasis on teaching basic skills, to maintain stricter discipline, and to employ better teachers. Also, over three-fourths of the respondents indicated that those wishing to be teachers should be required to pass a state board examination on subjects they will teach in addition to meeting college requirements for a teacher's certificate. When queried about changes for program requirements, over two-thirds agreed with the statement that students should be required to pass competency tests before graduating from high school.

People learn about schools and school programs in various ways. For over 80 percent of the respondents, local newspapers, talking with others in the community and talking with parents of school age children

provided information about the schools. The local newspaper was cited as the most informative single source by which the public learned about the school and its programs.

In general, if children of the respondents had ever attended the school being rated, there was a tendency to assign grades (less "don't know" answers) and also to assign higher grades (more A or B grades) to the school being graded. Also, if children had attended Iowa public universities or private colleges or universities, there was a general trend in all school evaluations for the percentage of A or B grades to be higher than the total sample and "don't know" answers to be lower.

Fifty-five percent and 52 percent respectively of the respondents indicated that public elementary and secondary schools were doing a better job today than when they attended school. Respondents in the age group 40-49 years, those who had children in school and those who did not have an academic degree, indicated the highest level of agreement that the public elementary and secondary schools were doing a better job today than when they attended school.

It can be concluded that Iowans as represented by the sample in this study:

--award generally favorable ratings to the elementary and secondary schools in their local districts.

--assign a somewhat lesser rating to local school boards and local parent/teacher associations.

--assign slightly higher evaluations to post-secondary education as represented by area community colleges, the public universities and the private colleges and universities.

--indicated a lack of familiarity concerning education agencies and organizations other than public schools and universities. A higher incidence of responses ranging from approximately one-third to two-thirds occurred in the "don't know" categories.

--held the most serious current or existing problem to be discipline and drug abuse and felt on a comparative basis the most serious potential problems were discipline, alcohol, drug abuse, lack of public interest, lack of parental involvement and lack of student interest in learning.

(It should be noted that of all the potential problems identified, only drug abuse was listed as a very serious problem as indicated by 12 percent of the respondents.)

--learned about their schools from numerous sources, i.e, reading the local newspapers and school publications as well as talking with students other than their own children, with teachers, with parents and with others in the community.

--gave the highest ratings among all school programs to competitive athletic programs for boys and girls as well as other extracurricular activities.

(Teaching of basic skills, providing for special needs and preparing students for college received the next highest ratings.)

--ranked elementary school teachers highest among school personnel followed by secondary teachers, administrators and counselors.

--felt that schools were doing several things "best", i.e. providing general education, sports and athletics, employing good teachers, providing general extracurricular activities.

--indicated that quality could be improved by emphasizing teaching the basics (reading, writing and arithmetic), by better teachers and by stricter discipline.

--held that expenditures could be reduced by cutting back or eliminating athletics and other extracurricular activities.

--considered important goals to be the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic skills, followed by teaching good citizenship, developing a desire for learning and teaching respect for others.

--do not favor programs for three-and four-year-old children, want competency tests for graduation from high school; want teachers to pass a state board examination in the subject matter areas they teach.

--feel, by a slim majority, that today's students receive both a better elementary and secondary education than they did when they went to school.

Based on the 760 respondents from the General Public in Iowa, the report card for "Education in Iowa" is very good. A majority of Iowans gave public schools, area community colleges, public universities and private colleges and universities "A" or "B" grades. Personnel in public elementary and secondary schools received high marks as well as several specific programs, activities and functions. Iowans indicate emphasis should be placed on the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Also, Iowans use several sources to obtain information about public schools. In agreement with national surveys, major problems indicated are discipline, drug abuse and alcohol abuse.

In the eyes of the Iowans responding to the survey, schools are doing a better job today at both the elementary (55 percent) and secondary (52 percent) levels than when they attended schools. It is hoped that information in this report will be useful to educators and others in planning for the continued excellence for Education in Iowa.

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